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Organization aids and represents freelance writers

Founded in 1948, the American Society of Journalists and Authors (ASJA) is the nation's professional organization of independent nonfiction writers, and consists of more than 1,300 freelance writers of magazine articles, trade books, and many other forms of nonfiction writing.

ASJA offers benefits and services focusing on professional development, including regular confidential market information, meetings with editors and others in the field, a referral service, seminars and workshops, discount services, and the opportunity for members to explore professional issues and concerns with their peers.

ASJA also represents freelancers' interests, serving as spokesman for their right to control and profit from uses of their work in the new media and otherwise. It also helps provide ready access to writers proven in the marketplace, capable of producing articles, books, brochures and scripts through its Freelance Writer Search.

ASJA headquarters are in New York City, and the society has active regional chapters throughout the U.S.

Learn more at www.asja.org.

ABOUT POETRY

Forgotten Dreams

By Mark Gibbons, and featuring seven portraits by Lee Nye from the Eddie's Club Collection

Published July 2012 by FootHills Publishing, Kanona, NY

\$16 softcover

Mark Gibbons, the hardest-working man in Poe-biz, has written what I consider his finest collection. Tender and brutal, honest and unsparing, Gibbons catalogues a lifetime of hard physical labor, and the history of an Irish family bedeviled by drink. There's social observation, and pure emotions made real.

Gibbons, his life dedicated to literature, has worked the most difficult, body-grinding occupations, piloting 18-wheelers up and down mountains on dark roads, guided by moonlight, hauling furniture, lugging pianos up stairs for fussy clients, covering the state of Montana from the cab of his big rig, observing and detailing everything that matters.

Like the faces of the men in Lee Nye's photographs, which adorn this collection, this is the shadow side of the working man's toil and appetite and God-longing; of the drink and what it does, and, in the end, how love endures.

Gibbons's poem, dedicated to his father, Vince, calls him, "A wolf man/ tumbling out of control ...".

And this, from "Luck of the Irish":
my mother and me talking

at the kitchen table
about my dad dead-
drunk in the bed
& the hateful shit he said
to her & me. She made sure
I knew that wasn't my father,
the man we loved in there
it was the boozy devil
inside all sad men.

This poem, the best account ever of the "luck" of the Irish, shows the necessity to cope, and more importantly, to continue loving, tightly bound to blood, even a world away.

There is no decoration in Gibbons's poetry, no ornaments or posturing. These life pieces are from a man who has experienced life hands-on, no apologies or regrets, and still sings for beauty.

The noise of the ruling warmongers and profiteers is deafening,

but Gibbons's voice is strong and clear, ferocious, with chromatic invitations to dream. These are prayers, requiems, love letters; all of it driven with the intensity of the poet to connect soul-to-soul, which I believe he accomplishes.

The Missoula poet's new book is part of the Montana Poets Series, edited by Craig Czury, and is his fifth collection of poems.

— Sheryl Noethe,
Poet Laureate of Montana

FORGOTTEN DREAMS



Mark Gibbons

MONTANA POET LAUREATE

Reservation School by Sheryl Noethe

The poet asks the children to hold their breath and keep still.
Eyes wide, hands covering mouths, they look around at each other.
Not wanting to break the moment until they gasp and laugh.

Now, he says, write about the silence.
Silence is a rock not moving in a lake

Says the brown haired 4th grader in a whisper.
I nod, and a few children like that, they begin
Nodding their heads at beautiful thoughts.

A little girl in braids with a waist as narrow as a wasp
Reads from her poem.
Silence is a sad sob in the night

Wow! I say. Oh Man! Could you repeat that?
She shrugs, tosses off the line, which circles the room.

A boy with a cut on his finger shakes it and puts it in his mouth.
Silence is an empty jar in an old house.
He shows me the hurt finger again.

A little cowgirl stands and waits for quiet to say,
Silence is a window not opened

We smile tenderly at each other.
Nod. In this sudden outbreak of splendor we are happy to be together.
Finally, the boy who was working on his drawing says,
Silence is in a bottle and a basket

This is the end of class time, and everyone lines up
to exchange high fives and congratulations.
Silence is when my baby sister is asleep
Silence is cats wondering.

I roll this afternoon around in my mouth.
Something sweeter than a ripe peach or custard,
How close the soul can come to the skin
When the body is still so new.



Photo by Kurt Wilson

Half-Blind Mirror, Poems

By Bill Lovelady

Published May 2012 by The Neighborhood Office, Helena, MT

\$11.95 softcover

Helena poet Bill Lovelady, a veteran of World War II and avowed pacifist, has written poems for most of his multi-hued life. He grew up in Texas during the Depression, fought in the Battle of the Bulge, and has worked as teacher, methods engineer, social worker and home builder: "a carpenter who drives nails/ but four months a year,/ a writer who doesn't write,/ a gardener who doesn't hoe."

Childhood, family, war, death, marriage (62 years!), the schism between life and religion, all find their way into this slender chapbook.

"In Praise of Rodney Street" pays homage to "The blocks that howl at night,/ sleep in the day, section/ in the shadow of the cathedral,/ stretch that is conveniently close/ to places to pawn a toaster,/ the city jail and mortuaries ..."

His gritty poems about WWII capture the despair, terror and hypocrisy of war: "knowing we won't feel cold/ when we're lying face down/ in a field of pink disgracing snow."

His daughter, Georgia, notes in the introduction that her father is "as unsentimental about death as he is about the 'good war.'" He steps sprightly toward "the other shore" to the music of Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys in "Goodbye, y'all": "And I'll down a snort of muscatel/ rose red and sweet and tender/ and Texas two-step off the edge/ into the bony arms of chaos."

— Kristi Niemeyer

Killing the Murnion Dogs

By Joe Wilkins

Published 2011 by Black Lawrence Press, Pittsburgh, PA

\$14 softcover

Joe Wilkins, who grew up north of the Bull Mountains in eastern Montana, crafts "patient, vulnerable, angry and unapologetically romantic poems" in his first full-length collection, writes poet and essayist Lia Purpura.

In the title poem, raw and sad, his father kills the neighbor's dogs ("seven slick little cow dogs and that night/ they were all fast and wild, their jaws clicking") after they kill his herd of sheep. It's about his father's death too, three years later – a father "I don't remember outside of sickness and death."

Wilkins, who taught at public schools in the Mississippi Delta, also writes vividly about that experience, a northerner in the

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